UNIDO

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Distr.
GENERAL

IDB.9/13
16 April 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Industrial Development Board

Ninth session
Vienna, 18-22 May 1992
Item 13 of the provisional agenda

CONDUCT OF BUSINESS AND RATIONALIZATION OF PROCEEDINGS

Streamlining the work of the policy-making organs

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

Discusses the background of and the issues relating to streamlining the work of the policy-making organs and presents proposals for achieving that streamlining.

CONTENTS

	Paragraphs	Page
Introduction	1 - 4	1
Chapter		
I. PROPOSALS FOR STREAMLINING THE REPORTING TO POLICY-MAKING ORGANS	5 - 12	2
II. ACTION REQUIRED OF THE BOARD	13	3

Introduction

1. At the fourth session of the Industrial Development Board (1988), general concern was expressed regarding the lengthening list of agenda items and the increasing volume of documentation with which the Board was being confronted at each session since UNIDO became a specialized agency. At the same time the Board recognized the need for a more fruitful discussion and effective substantive consideration of the major issues of industrial development requiring solution for developing countries. The Board thus decided to entrust an open-ended working group with the task of examining ways of improving the conduct of business and of further rationalizing the proceedings of the forthcoming meetings of the Board, with a view to permitting a thorough and concrete discussion of the issues (decision IDB.4/Dec.3).

2. The recommendations of the working group on the subject were endorsed by the Board at its fifth session (1989) when it also decided to start applying them with immediate effect and to look at the matter again in 1993 (decision IDB.5/Dec.46).

3. At its eighth session (1991), the Board noted with concern that since drawing up those recommendations: (a) the number of items on the agendas of the Board had continued to increase drastically throughout the biennium 1990-1991, leaving little time for a substantive discussion of many important agenda items; (b) it had been impossible to avoid a repetition of items in the agendas during the biennium; and (c) the amount of pre-session documentation had significantly increased as a consequence of overloaded agendas, thus rendering proper preparation virtually impossible. The Board decided to discuss that issue in greater depth, with a view to possibly amending some of the recommendations at its ninth session (decision IDB.8/Dec.43). Information on the experience gained by the Secretariat in applying those recommendations will be provided to the Board in a conference room paper.

4. In the context of the medium-term plan, 1992-1997, the General Conference in its resolution GC.4/Res.26 also put forward recommendations for streamlining the work of the policy-making organs and the Board was called upon to examine ways and means of achieving the implementation of those recommendations in its work. In particular, the Conference decided that, on a trial basis, reporting on selected programme and policy issues under consideration by the policy-making organs would be integrated in a

V.92 53215 2890E

Distr.: 22 April 1992

consolidated report of the Director-General to be updated and to be distributed in chapters as soon as ready. The present note presents some proposals to the Board in that respect.

I. PROPOSALS FOR STREAMLINING THE REPORTING TO POLICY-MAKING ORGANS

5. In line with the recommendations contained in resolution GC.4/Res.26, reporting on programme and policy issues for the next two years would have to be based on the presentation of the medium-term plan, 1992-1997 (PBC.7/17), and the documentation would have to be organized in the form of a single volume divided into chapters into which the material presented to the Board and the Conference would be gradually fed in the course of a biennium.

6. Based on the priority problem areas and common elements of the medium-term plan (PBC.7/17, chap. I) as well as the policy issues and major categories of programme instrument (PBC.7/17, chap. II and III), the following would be the headings of the chapters of the proposed single volume:

1. Major themes
   - (a) Human resource development
   - (b) Development and transfer of technology
   - (c) Industrial rehabilitation
   - (d) Small- and medium-scale industries
   - (e) Environment and energy
   - (f) Mobilization of financial resources for industrial development
   - (g) Economic cooperation among developing countries and subregional industrial cooperation
   - (h) Integration of women in industrial development
2. The regional dimension
3. Studies and research
   - (a) Studies and research for industrial strategy and policy formulation
   - (b) Action-oriented studies and research for policy and programme implementation
4. Policy forums
5. Industrial promotion
   - (a) Industrial investment promotion
   - (b) Industrial technology promotion
6. Information services
7. Technical cooperation
   - (a) Programme development and management
   - (b) Project operations
8. Inter-agency coordination
9. Policy management
10. Programme support

7. The Secretariat is already reporting on all the activities of the Organization for a given year in one single volume - the Annual Report of UNIDO - which is considered by Member States to be the most important document of the Organization (see IDB.5/Dec.46, annex, para. 9). When the Board meets late in the year, i.e. when it holds a second regular session for the year (see IDB.5/Dec.46, annex, para. 2), the Secretariat prepares a succinct update of the Annual Report only on those subjects for which the Board has requested a progress report or for which significant developments have taken place between the issuance of the Annual Report and the session of the Board (see IDB.5/Dec.46, annex, para. 9). This update is presented in the same sequence as the chapters of the Annual Report.

8. Except for the Annual Report and progress reports mentioned in the above paragraph, the approach of presenting all the substantive documentation by chapters of one single consolidated report would not be practical for the following reasons:

(a) The reporting in a single document divided into chapters would be expected to lead to a coherent text, making easier reading for the user. However, for most of the topics, various types of reports are requested from the Secretariat:

(i) Progress reports (e.g. for the current session IDB.9/10, Add.1 and 2, IDB.9/2, IDB.9/6)

(ii) Reports on specific aspects of a programme (e.g. for the current session IDB.9/3, IDB.9/11, IDB.9/14, IDB.9/7, IDB.9/8, IDB.9/12)

(iii) Proposals for future activities submitted to the Board for approval (e.g. for the current session IDB.9/15, IDB.9/5)

All the reports under (i) and some of those under (ii) would provide coherent reading if combined under a single document. However, the reports under (iii) - and even some under (ii) - might be approved, rejected or amended by the Board. They might therefore provide a distorted picture if presented in one single document, unless the decisions of the Board are also fed into such a document.

(b) The preparation of each chapter would involve many different programmes and subprogrammes. The drafting would thus require much more time than is usually the case with the current type of reporting, when the documents are being gradually (and often simultaneously) processed and translated. The proposed reporting by chapters would thus entail significant delays in the processing, translation and thus in the distribution to Member States.

9. As decided by the General Conference in resolution GC.4/Res.2 adopted at its fourth session, future annual reports are to incorporate the programme performance report on the basis of a new format of the programme and budgets, which is being applied for the first time to the biennium 1992-1993 (GC.4/42). In accordance with that

format, the presentation of the next Annual Reports (1992 and 1993) will be based on the major programmes 100 to 800 listed in the table of contents of document GC.4/42, i.e.:

1. Policy-making organs
2. General management
3. Programme and project development
4. Industrial promotion, Consultations and technology
5. Industrial operations
6. Common programmes
7. External relations, public information, language and documentation services
8. Administration

10. If all substantive documentation for a given biennium were to be grouped under major headings, it might be useful for the reader if the groupings corresponded to the major programmes and subprogrammes approved in the programme and budgets for that biennium, particularly since those programmes and subprogrammes are based on the medium-term plan. Thus, for the years 1992-1993, all documentation could be presented under the eight major programmes mentioned above. Likewise the agendas of the policy-making organs could be presented under the headings of those major programmes, e.g. for the current session items 4, 6 to 11, 14 and 16 of the provisional agenda could have been presented as follows:

- General management:

  Subprogramme 216 - UNIDO policies, including energy

- Programme and project development:

  Subprogramme 321 - UNIDO Country Director programme
  Subprogramme 336 - Economic co-operation among developing countries
  Subprogramme 341 - Structure of world industrialization from the long-term perspective

- Industrial promotion, Consultations and technology:

  Programme 420 - Industrial investment
  Programme 430 - System of Consultations
  Programmes 440, 450 - Development and transfer of technology

- Industrial operations:

  Major programme 500 - Technical co-operation activities in 1991

- Administration:

  Subprogramme 812 - Electronic data-processing programme.

This presentation would make it easier for the user to keep information files on the developments under each programme/subprogramme.

11. In order to focus on specific priority themes of the medium-term plan in the current biennium, the Board may wish to include two or three of those themes in the agenda of each session. The Secretariat could then prepare a special report on the activities undertaken for the relevant priority areas and common elements under the various programmes and subprogrammes. This task would be facilitated by the fact that programmatic frameworks for each of the five priority problem areas and three common elements in the medium-term plan would be available to the policy-making organs. Of the programme frameworks, the UNIDO programme and plan of action for the integration of women in industrial development was endorsed by the General Conference at its third session and the environmental programme was approved by the Board at its sixth session, while the energy programme is scheduled for submission to the Board at its ninth session. It is planned to present all programme frameworks to the legislative bodies prior to the biennium 1994-1995. Drawn up in late 1991 and early 1992 and using a standard format, the frameworks provide a more detailed description of the Organization's response through a programme structure that includes the development objectives and mandate of the programmes, their priorities and target groups, the individual subprogrammes and the corresponding outputs and activities. The programme frameworks are meant not only to help mobilize additional extrabudgetary resources and translate priorities into operational activities, but also to provide a basis for reporting and evaluating the substantive activities of the Organization.

12. Should the Board prefer to introduce a new reporting system based fully on the themes of the medium-term plan, it would be advisable to streamline the headings listed in paragraph 6 above to avoid duplication in the reporting. It would also be necessary to decide on the sequence and grouping of the priorities to be considered.

II. ACTION REQUIRED OF THE BOARD

13. The Board may wish to consider the following proposals:

(a) To organize its agenda on the basis of the major programmes and subprogrammes of the programme and budgets and propose a similar presentation for the provisional agenda of the fifth session of the General Conference;

(b) To concentrate its discussions on the Annual Report of the Organization; and

(c) To include in the agenda of each session the consideration of a special report on two to three of the priority problem areas and common elements of the medium-term plan.